

Iran

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The recent alleged coup attempt and the continuing examination of parliamentary credentials have given Iran's clerical leadership additional opportunities to make a more definite break with certain prominent moderates and their followers, as well as with some leftist organizations. The immediate result, of course, is a further increase in the clerics' power. But, in the longer run, a more important one is the widening of the gap between the clerics and those experienced moderates who have the technical expertise necessary to make Iran's Islamic government work effectively.

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In looking for scapegoats connected with the apparent military coup attempt and in scrutinizing the worthiness to serve in parliament of those elected in May, the clerical leadership has:

- forced Admiral Madani, one of the most effective figures to be brought to power by the revolution and a leading candidate to be the first Prime Minister, to announce that he will no longer associate himself with the parliament. Some of his followers in Kerman have been arrested, and Ayatollah Rafsanjani has hinted that Madani may have had some connection with the coup plotting.
- led an overwhelming vote rejecting the parliamentary credentials of Khosro Qashqai, leader of the powerful Qashqai tribe. Qashqai has also been accused of having been a CIA agent run by Tom Ahern. The Qashqai leadership has long been an important element in Iran's national governments, but the clerics apparently prefer a break rather than a coalition.
- stated that at least some of the leaders of the National Front, the Iran Party and, perhaps, the Toilers Party were implicated in the coup planning. These organizations contain some of what remains of the old Westernized, moderate elite that was involved with Khomeini in the Shah's overthrow.
- suggested that the Tudeh (Communist) Party and perhaps other leftists may have had connections with the coup plotters.

These latest events will make it almost impossible for many moderate laymen to work with the clerics. Madani has not, however, given up seeking a place for himself on the political scene. In a speech in Tehran on July 13 he said that "specialists should govern" and "slogans are not enough; there must be action." This is about as critical of the government as Iranian leaders dare to be these days. Such comments will undoubtedly be taken as one more count against Madani.

All of these developments further weaken President Bani-Sadr. It was he who had once considered appointing Madani as Prime Minister. In addition, only a few weeks ago Bani-Sadr had rescued Qashqai from arrest as a result of charges of subversion by the parliamentary leadership.

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State Department review completed

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